



# Curios and Relics

## Furniture

### Beds

### Lincoln Slept In

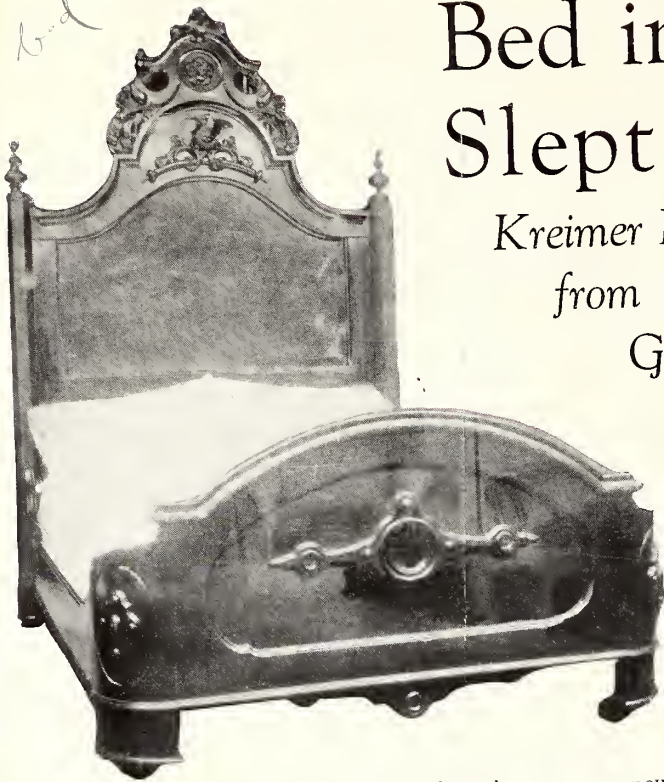
Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

# Bed in Which Lincoln Slept Draws Crowds

*Kreimer Bros., of Cincinnati Display Suite from old Burnet House Where the Great Emancipator Stopped*

By Felix J. Koch



Of course, all furniture merchants cannot show furniture used by Abraham Lincoln or other notables in their windows but any furniture merchant can create interest in present day furniture styles by showing the oldest pieces of furniture in his city along with the newest designs in stock. He can obtain the old pieces by offering a prize for the oldest furniture in town, promising to return it after it has been placed on display for a week during his Summer or Fall Style Show display.

**D**OWN Cincinnati way, recently there has come a new and almost unprecedented interest in Abraham Lincoln, precipitated by a progressive furniture store.

For many years the Burnet House, at the corner of Third and Vine streets,—very nearly in the heart of the city, was one of the big hostelrys of town. Notables from Lincoln and Farragut to McKinley took lodging there.

Then a change came to Third Street. A great insurance company purchased the old hostelry for the sake of its extra-valuable site, and, now the Burnet House is being razed.

Bag and baggage, beans, bricks and base-boards, china and glassware, linens, silver, chairs, have been sold; in most cases, to the highest bidder. Everything has been disposed of except the contents of one room of the old hotel.

This is the room occupied by Abraham Lincoln on his birthday February 12, 1861, almost three-quarters of a century ago. Purchasers of the old Burnet House have taken every care possible that every object in that room should be preserved. Particularly, the fine old bed, the bureau, the dresser, the heavy chairs, and the "what-not."

The brothers Kreimer, wealthy furniture-retailers of Cincinnati, placed the heirlooms on display in one of their major windows; with Old Glory, as she was in Lincoln's time, above and a tidy statuette of Abraham Lincoln at the side.

Meantime, a handsome new building is rising on the site of the old Burnet House. In it the "Lincoln Room" of the old hotel will be reproduced entire; and into it, quite obviously, the furniture, wall-mirror, all the rest, will go. Then, with door to the room open, but silken cord to keep the comer out, it will become a shrine for pilgrims to the "Queen City of the West."

Meanwhile, watching the crowds gathering and dissolving, before the quaint mementoes of his visit there, one could not help but feel that love of the Great Emancipator flourishes still,—and nothing is more indicative of that affection than the reverence paid this aged furniture in Kreimer's store window.



*The big black walnut bow-end bed in which Lincoln slept on his birthday, February 12, 1861, in the Burnet House at Cincinnati, still stands as majestic as the night the Great Emancipator occupied it, a splendid example of the type of furniture popular before the Civil War.*

Of course the dresser and the table have a marble top because all good furniture in those days had marble tops. Some day this type of furniture may return to be known as the Lincoln period.





HISTORIC BED in which Abraham Lincoln slept at the home of Henry Onstott in New Salem in 1832. Mr. Onstott operated the cooper shop which has been restored in the New Salem State Park and this photograph is the property of his granddaughter, Susana E. Onstott, of Forest City, Ill. Other Lincoln relics are in the Onstott home in Forest City.

PEORIA ILL STAR  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1931.

OWNER CLAIMS OLD BED  
ONCE USED BY LINCOLN

Farmer City, Ill. (IP)—Among collections of antiques—relics or the prairie days in the Middle West—Mrs. Ida Brooks, Farmer City, has an old four poster, stool type walnut bed, which is said to have once belonged to Abraham Lincoln and his wife in Springfield.

The bed, according to Mrs. Brooks, came into her possession through her grandfather, Gregory Lutkins, a close friend of Lincoln. Lutkins is said to have purchased it from Lincoln after the latter had consulted Mrs. Lincoln as to their need of a spare bed and had inquired as to any possible objections to such a sale.

DURANGO, COL., HERALD  
MAR. 13, 1931

M20

PAWNIUSKA, OKLA., JOURNAL,  
MAR. 13, 1931 M17

OWNER CLAIMS OLD BED  
ONCE USED BY LINCOLN  
FARMER CITY, Ill., (U.P.)

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*The Life Ætna-izer*

*March 1932*

*A Lincoln bedroom*



THE bed in which Abraham Lincoln slept before the second of his historic debates with Stephen A. Douglas in August, 1858, and which has remained at the Brewster

house in Freeport, Ill., was purchased recently from M. B. Marvin by **Lester O. Schriver**, our Peoria, G. A.

Mr. Schriver is an authority on Lincoln, has a large collection of Lincolniana. Every year, at Lincoln season, he is called upon for talks on the life of the beloved emancipator.



Not unless we can not doubt as soon well <sup>St. Louis, Mo.,</sup>

Passa Mo, April 15<sup>th</sup> 1932.

Dr Louis A. Warren:

Dear Sir.

In reply to a notice printed in our WK paper  
I find your address. I have an old four poster  
bed that we were all born on is the reason  
for keeping it I guess. My mother always wed  
as children not to part with it it was bought  
I think in St Louis or near there my father +  
mother were married in 1888 in Pa. + came to  
no early want to housekeeping + + this was  
their first bed now my father bring a stock  
man + drove cattle down into Tenn - Ky - +  
Ill. came across some of this stuff that  
was supposed to be in the Lincoln family  
+ bring a descendant of the Todd family  
my father that my mother would Christ  
the that of which she never did, we being  
Northern Democrats. Now I still have that  
wed but can't prove a thing so don't ask me  
to as they are all gone but I have so much  
old stuff would part with this

St. Louis, Mo.

And as my children are both boys & don't  
care for relics. Their wives wait the news.  
Hoping to hear from you, I have an old  
saber that Brady jumped Fort Erie  
with that was left to my grandfather  
then down to my father it has a history  
also. all I know was just told to me &  
I can not prove a thing.

Mrs Sterling M. Smith  
1001 Main St.  
Ball a mo





# LINCOLN BED IN BREWSTER HOTEL IS SOLD FOR \$20

*Freeport Journal-Standard*  
*Oct. 24-1932*

**M. B. MARVIN, FREEPORT, PUR-  
CHASER; ENTIRE EQUIPMENT  
DISPOSED OF AT AUCTION**

The sale of effects contained in the Brewster house, known the country over as one of the old-time hotels of northern Illinois, and closely associated with memories of the Lincoln-Douglas debate, drew several thousand persons to the hotel Saturday, when the equipment was sold at auction.

The sale was a study in human nature, and one of the most interesting of its kind held in this community according to Col. Edgar E. Eells, who officiated as auctioneer.

Interest centered around the disposal of the bed in which Lincoln slept during his stay here overnight on the occasion of his debate with Douglas in 1858. This bed sold at \$20 and was purchased by M. B. Marvin, of Freeport, who also bought the two old, faded red tapestry settees and other effects in the Lincoln room.

A number of walnut chairs were purchased by Aurel Saxby.

Mrs. A. Gelsback, of Pittsburgh, a former Winslow resident, bought the furnishings of the room occupied by Douglas which sold at \$12.50. An old frame containing a portrait of Lincoln went to Mrs. E. L. Campbell for \$1.30; a walnut table in the building since its opening was sold to F. Kimes for \$3.50, and Mrs. K. H. Knowlton purchased a settee of the same antiquity for \$6.50. An old clock, wound with a crank, and which it is claimed had not stopped in 25 years, brought \$12. Mrs. Walter Giffro, Freeport, was the purchaser. As George Burkhardt, night clerk at the hotel for the past 40 years, saw his old relic removed he realized that he would not have this duty to perform in the future.

E. R. Johnson, of Eleroy, assisted by seven members of his family, loaded a two horse wagon as high as the goods would carry, returning home with his purchases which totaled \$6. Four truck loads bid in by one buyer went to Sterling. Five old fashioned folding beds operated by a lever, were purchased by William Hunt for use on his farm.

Henry Johanning bought enough effects to equip two cabins on the hunting grounds where he will spend a part of each shooting season.

## Old Desk Brings Dollar

Many buyers were present who bought odd chairs and other furnishings that their parents in other days had liked while patrons of the hotel. The old desk, a combination register, desk and cash drawer was sold for \$1. Seventy fire escapes equipped with half-inch rope which varied in length from 10 to 70 feet and amounting to some 5,000 feet all told was sold in a lump sum for \$5.

Three hundred pillows sold at 6 for \$1; 400 blankets at 3 for \$1.50; 350 dining room chairs brought from 35 cents to \$1; 150 rockers sold at from 50 cents to \$5 each. The old-fashioned heavy white rocking chairs which lined the curb at the hotel for more than half a century averaged \$4 each. Floor coverings were sold on the floor, to be removed by the buyer, and hundreds of odds and ends were sold at a small sum for the contents of the room.

No announcement has been made as to the future of the hotel site. It is probable that the property will be razed, but which of the many rumors as to whether a new building will be built, small store fronts erected or a parking space occupy the site will prove true is problematical.

*Courtesy of Mrs. Henry  
Burrell, Pittsburgh,  
Pa.*



## Lincoln And Douglas Beds Sell for \$21.25

By Associated Press.

ROCKFORD, Ill., Monday, Oct. 24.—The beds on which Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas slept before their historic debate here in 1858 were sold at auction yesterday—for \$20 and \$1.25 respectively.

The beds were included in the furnishings of the Brewster House which were sold at auction. The Brewster House, opened in 1857, will be torn down to make way for a new building.

Canoe

### **Douglas-Lincoln Beds Net \$21.25 at Auction**

Rockford, Ill., Oct. 31.—The beds on which Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas slept before their historic debate here in 1858 were sold at auction—for \$20 and \$1.25 respectively.

The beds were included in the furnishings of the Brewster house which were sold at auction. The Brewster house, opened in 1857, was closed recently and will be torn down to make way for a new building.

Matthew Marvin, of Freeport, bid \$20 for the Lincoln bed, but obtained it with the rest of the furnishings in the room for a collective bid of \$100. A Mrs. Gerbrach of Chicago got the bed used by Douglas.

## The Lincoln Bed

**S**EVENTY-FOUR years ago two candidates debated in Rockford, then a small Illinois town. The dusty square was packed with farmers and their families in wagons and phaetons, while brass bands pumped out "Oh, Susanna," and dignitaries sweated in two-quart beaver hats.

One candidate was greeted with acclaim and shots from a twelve-pound cannon. He had arrived in a special train and been put up in the best bed at the hotel.

The other, a gangling visitor in wrecked trousers, got off a regular passenger coach, ungreeted, and carried his carpet-bag himself. He probably got whatever bed was left.

Last week the bed Abraham Lincoln slept in before the debate was sold at auction for \$20. The other, occupied by Stephen A. Douglas, went for \$1.25.

The speeches were equally good, historians tell us, and perhaps no recorded debate in our language displays such vigor, clear analysis of values and energetic give and take.

The beds and speeches have both endured. Perhaps both were made better in those days.

### WHERE LINCOLN SLEPT

Just to keep the record straight it may be worth while to call attention to the fact that the Associated Press dispatch dated Rockford, Ill., gives an erroneous impression to its readers. It tells of the sale of the bed in which Lincoln slept at the time of "his historic debate here" with Stephen A. Douglas in 1858.

No Douglas debate was held there. The name of the hotel in which the furniture was used years ago supplies the clew to what is meant. The old Brewster House was in Freeport in the adjoining county. The dispatch from Rockford deals with the beds in which both Lincoln and Douglas slept there the night before the famous meeting in which Lincoln placed Douglas on the defensive by putting to him the deadly question about the possibility of excluding slavery from the territories.

*Boston Herald 10-26-'32*



July 2, 1935

PAGE FOUR.

## Bed Where Lincoln Slept Shown in Unique Exhibit

The bed in which Abraham Lincoln slept during his stay at the old Tallman house on North Jackson street, in 1859, is on display in the window of the Leath Furniture store, forming one of the most interesting of the many Centennial exhibits in store windows. The bed, constructed of rosewood, and a marble slab-topped bureau were in the room in which he stayed overnight. The other pieces, including two tables and two chairs, came from the Tallman home although they were not in the Lincoln room. A green Brussels rug, is also in the display which is thought to have been in the room but no proof of this can be found. An interesting feature of the display is two silver candle sticks, a silver tray and a "snuffer," constructed on the order of a pair of scissors, which was used to put out the candles.

On one of the tables is a copy of the February 6, 1926 edition of the Dearborn Independent which carries the story of Lucian S. Hanks' version of the night which Mr. Lincoln spent at the Tallman home. Mr. Hanks, who retired as president of the State Bank at Madison in 1920, reveals in the articles the occurrences of the night which he slept with Mr. Lincoln.

Mr. Hanks retired before Lincoln but had not gone to sleep when the famous president came to bed. From the time he got into bed Mr. Lincoln started to squirm because of the small quarters into which he had to put his tall form. When he started to lie corner wise across the bed Hanks gave up and got out of bed.

The bed in the display is the same as it was that night. Over it is a picture of the Great Emancipator.

The display was made by a committee in charge of Mrs. E. J. Haumerson.



JULY 26, 1935.

*Pearia Journal*

## DE NEWS IN PICTURES



**BED USED BY LINCOLN IN TREMONT**—Abraham Lincoln slept in this bed. Now it reposes in an unused room at the E. L. Storrer home at Tremont. In picture are shown Dorothy (left) and Orville Sauder, children of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Sauder of Pekin. (Journal-Transcript Photo.)



July 7<sup>th</sup> 1947  
c/o The American Embassy  
Guatemala City  
Dear Aunt

Dear Mr. Barton,

Not long ago a friend sent me several copies of *Hobbies* magazine. Among the copies was the issue for February 1947 with several articles on Lincoln collectors.

My husband's family have in storage (it has been stored now for some twenty odd years) a bed which we always referred to as the Lincoln bed.

Actually it was never owned by President Lincoln but was made especially for him by his (Lincoln's) Attorney General — A. M. Bates. The legend connected with bed is this: Mr. Bates often asked Mr. Lincoln to spend work weeks at his home that was outside

of Washington on the banks of  
the Potomac river. The morning  
after Mr Lincoln's first visit, Mr  
Bates asked him how he had  
slept to which Mr Lincoln re-  
plied, that he could have slept  
better if the bed had been a foot  
longer. Mr Bates told him he  
was sorry, but I will say that  
for your next visit that you  
have a bed especially built  
for your length. Accordingly  
he had this bed made by  
a cabinet maker. It is indeed  
a tremendous affair being six  
feet across and seven feet long.  
It is of the style in vogue  
in the 1860 — high head board  
about eight feet as I remember  
and the foot board about four.  
It is painted black, has a nice  
soft abony finish but when the  
original springs wore out, my  
mother-in-law could never find  
another set of springs to fit.  
She always meant to have some



3)

made especially for it but never did. Then too they moved to an apartment in 1910 and the bed was so cumbersome they couldn't use it in the smaller apartment bedroom. So it has been in storage some twenty years.

Now I have had this idea. The wood is really lovely and could be made into lovely cabinets to display collections of Lincolniana.

My husband's father, old General Cruise, was a great friend of Mr Bates, some ~~of~~ General John C. Bates. General Cruise and General Bates served together in St. Louis from 1903 to 04. It was during this time that Mrs Cruise saw the bed and persuaded General Bates to sell it to her.

My hope in writing to you Mr Bottom, is since reading your article "Some Sidelines of Lincoln Collecting", I had thought perhaps you might know of some one

4)

who might be interested in buying the bed, either to have it restored as a bed or to make cabinets or book cases.

I saw an article in the same magazine - "Lincoln Collectors I Have Known" by A. L. Marsh.

Do you know him? Do you think he might be interested?

Hope you went over whelmed with people offering Lincoln relics for sale since your article appeared in Stoddard, if so take your time in replying to this, as the bed has been stored more or less for 20 years a few more months can't hurt it.

Sincerely yours

(Mrs F. T.) Maryon H. Cruise

P.S. The bed is stored with Mr. Pottinger & Sons in Atlantic City N. J. Do you think \$300. would be too much to ask for it?

From: Robert Barton  
Foxboro, Mass.

July 23, 1947

Mrs. F. T. Cruse,  
United States Embassy,  
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Dear Mrs. Cruse:

This is in reply to your interesting letter regarding the "Lincoln Bed"; but I am afraid it will not be a very satisfactory reply since I have no suggestions to offer. However, I am sending your letter, with a carbon copy of this, to Dr. Louis A. Warren, Director, Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and if he can offer any suggestions I am sure you will hear from him.

Offhand, I should be inclined to doubt that you will ever get anything like \$300. for it, but I hope I'm wrong.

Very sincerely,

Robert Barton



2  
Cede

August 7, 1947

Mrs. F. T. Cruse  
United States Embassy  
Guatemala City, Guatemala

My dear Mrs. Cruse:

While I think you have a very interesting curio associated with Abraham Lincoln I seriously doubt whether it would be possible to find a market for it here in the states. There are a great many beds which Lincoln occupied while travelling the circuit in Illinois and also in visiting various hotels and the homes of friends so the one you have acquired is but one of many which he occupied. I regret indeed that I do not know of anyone who would be interested in its acquisition.

Very truly yours,

LAW:WG

Director



THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE  
INSURANCE COMPANY

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

KANSAS CITY GROUP OFFICE

TO

DATE December 13, 1953


SUBJECT

Mr. J. E. Pierce, of Salem, Missouri, has written a letter to us concerning the fact that he knows where we can get an antique bed used by Lincoln.

If you wish to contact him, his address is:

Mr. J. E. Pierce  
Pierce Insurance  
Pierce Building  
Salem, Missouri

Sincerely,

  
Ben H. Holladay  
Regional Group Manager

BHH:dlm

12-15-50

Dr M<sup>r</sup> Munk  
Here's something that may be  
of interest. I have acknowledged  
Halladay's letter, and I told him  
I would refer it to you.

Frank P. P.

December 22, 1958

Mr. J. E. Pierce  
Pierce Insurance  
Pierce Building  
Salem, Missouri

Dear Mr. Pierce:

We have recently received a letter from our Regional Group Manager of Kansas City, Mr. Ben H. Holladay telling us that you know of a Lincoln bed that might be purchased for our Museum. I can assure you that we are very much interested in such a relic as you have described to Mr. Holladay however we are in no position to purchase such a relic due to its size. Our Museum is not large enough for exhibiting Lincoln furniture. On several different occasions we have had an opportunity to buy Lincoln furniture and have had to turn down such opportunities because of a lack of space.

I want to thank you for indirectly bringing this matter to our attention and I regret that we cannot acquire the furniture for the reasons above mentioned.

Yours sincerely,

RGMcMurtry:pj

Director



December 22, 1958

Mr. Ben H. Halladay  
Regional Group Manager  
Kansas City Group Office

Dear Mr. Halladay:

I have your letter of December 13 and I want to thank you for bringing our attention to the fact that Mr. J. E. Pierce knows where an antique bed can be obtained which was once used by Abraham Lincoln. I have written to Mr. Pierce thanking him for bringing this matter to our attention but at the same time explaining that we are unable to acquire such large pieces of furniture. While such items as Mr. Pierce describes are of great interest we do not have the facilities to exhibit such large pieces in our foundation museum.

Thanking you for bringing this matter to our attention I remain

Yours sincerely,

RGMcMurtry:pj

Director



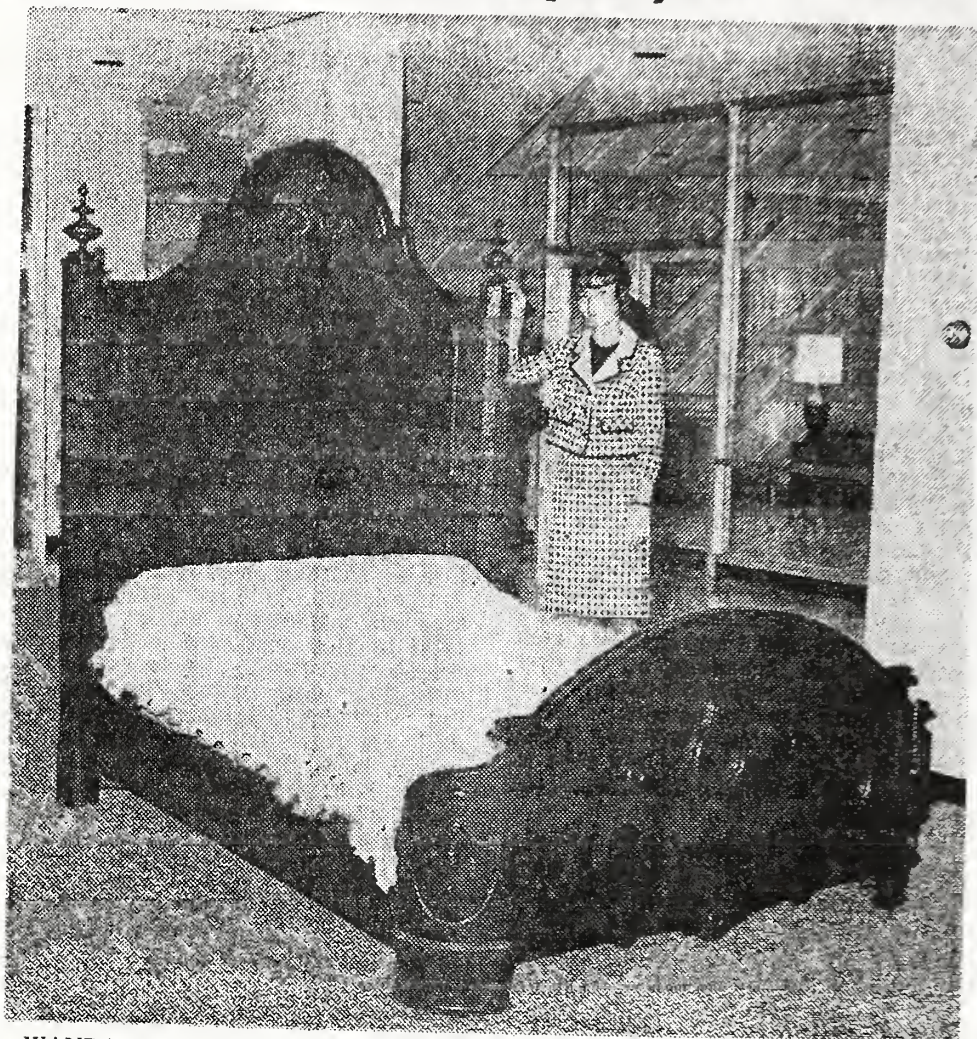
## 1600 Celebrate Union Central Centennial

A Lincoln bed, in which the former President slept on his 52nd birthday while en route to the 1861 inauguration, was the focal point of the Union Central Life Insurance Co. centennial celebration, held Sunday at the company's new headquarters at Mill and Waycross roads.

Over 1,600 employees, members of their families, and visitors attended the celebration. The Lincoln bed, along with other items of historic value, was returned for the occasion from Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tenn., where it is on loan to be part of a Lincoln Memorial Room in the president's home.

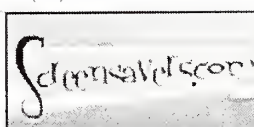
The Union Central had purchased the bed in 1926 at an auction of furnishings of the Burnet House, a hotel formerly located at Third and Vine Streets. The insurance company had purchased the building in that year; it was later torn down to make way for the Union Central Annex.

# Lincoln Bed Displayed Here



WANDA HELTON, MISS UNION CENTRAL, AND HISTORIC LINCOLN BED.





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## Lincoln really did sleep here

By Lara Brenckle  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Friday, November 3, 2006

Officials of the U.S. Senator John Heinz History Center confirmed this morning that the bed found in a South Park maintenance shed was slept in by Abraham Lincoln during a visit to Pittsburgh on Feb. 14, 1861.

Lincoln's train passed through the city on his way to Washington for his presidential inauguration after he won the 1860 election.

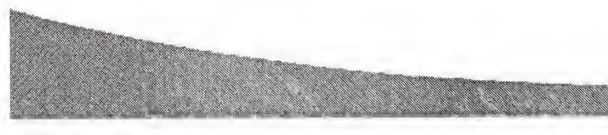
Lincoln stayed at the Monongahela House Hotel, and the furniture was donated to the county when the Downtown hotel was torn down.

"As an amateur historian, I've been wired all week," said Andy Baechle, the head of the Allegheny County Parks Department. "We believe we have found the Abraham Lincoln bed from the Monongahela House. To put it another way, we have no reason to believe we have not found it."

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authenticated.

The bed -- 6 feet, 4 inches long by 5 feet, 1 inch wide -- was found along with a side chair, a rocking chair and a commode historians have authenticated as coming from the Monongahela House.

Several other pieces of furniture, including a dresser and side tables, were found but have not yet been

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Andy Maisch, chief executive of the Heinz History Center in the Strip District, said the museum will host a Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration in 2009. The finds will be "an important part" of the exhibition, Maisch said.

*Lara Brenckle can be reached at lbrenckle@tribweb.com or 412-320-7840.*

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November 3, 2006

## Bed found in shed ID'd as Lincoln's

By Frances Burns


Experts say a bed found in an Allegheny County, Pa., storage shed appears to be the one Abraham Lincoln slept in during a night at a Pittsburgh hotel.

Officials announced the determination at the Sen. John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center, where the furniture Lincoln used is expected to be on display after restoration, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported.

After Lincoln's visit -- on his way to Washington for his 1861 inaugural -- the Monongahela Hotel reserved its "Lincoln Room" for its most distinguished guests, including several more presidents. The hotel closed its doors in 1935, and Lincoln's bed and other furniture vanished after a stay in a now-shuttered county museum.

Jason Busch, curator of decorative arts at the Carnegie Museum of Art, said the ornate walnut bed and other items discovered by a carpenter match photographs of the "Lincoln Bedroom." They are also in a style consistent with the mid 19th century when the room was furnished.

Two chairs and a chamber pot concealed inside a wooden commode were found with the bed. A feather mattress found with the other items -- which may not be the one Lincoln slept on -- showed signs of insect and snake infestation over the years.

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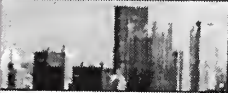
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## Allegheny County hands over Lincoln bed

By Justin Vellucci  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

The ownership of a bed in which President Abraham Lincoln once slept split Allegheny County Council along party lines Tuesday.

The council voted 9-4 to transfer ownership of the bed and related historical artifacts to the Senator John Heinz History Center in the Strip District. It also approved a measure that stops the center from reselling the items without council approval.

While the Democratic majority on the 15-member council OK'd the transfer, Republicans led by Councilman Matt Drozd of Ross wanted residents to retain ownership.

Councilman William Robinson, D-Hill District, broke with his party to oppose the sale.

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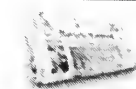
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"Finders, keepers; losers, weepers," Robinson said. "We found it. It was on the county's property. And I believe we ought to keep it."

Some residents criticized the move to hand over the artifacts, which were found in a storage shed, to the center.

"I take this move as a personal affront to me as a veteran and to all veterans," said Louis Nudi, 68, of Ross. "Keep the Lincoln bedroom at the Soldiers & Sailors memorial hall."

It is believed Lincoln slept in the bed when he stopped in the Monongahela House, Downtown, in February 1861 en route to his inauguration.

The bed was donated to the county in 1935 for display in the museum building at South Park, but disappeared in the 1990s.

County maintenance workers last year found the bed and other items in a building in South Park that is used by carpenters for storage.

*Justin Vellucci can be reached at [jvellucci@tribweb.com](mailto:jvellucci@tribweb.com) or 412-320-7847.*

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## Lincoln's real bed surrounded by mystery

By ERIN JAMES

The Evening Sun

Posted: 02/28/2009 10:29:23 PM EST



Caroline Smith sits on the bed in her home that she believes President Abraham Lincoln slept on the night before he gave the Gettysburg Address. Meanwhile, Gettysburg National Military Park officials say they have the genuine bed. (Evening Sun Photo by James Robinson)

Abraham Lincoln probably wouldn't have cared what happened to the bed he slept on the night of Nov. 18, 1863.

After all, he's the one who the very next day predicted, "The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here."

He might have been America's greatest president, but Lincoln was wrong this time - very wrong. As it turns out, the world cares a heck of a lot about the events before, during and after Lincoln delivered his famous Gettysburg Address.

We even care about which bed, which dresser and

which wash stand was in the bedroom of the David Wills House when Lincoln spent the night. It's a testament, perhaps, to our affinity for history.

That's the first ingredient in the recipe for any good Gettysburg controversy.




On display in the David Wills House museum, this bed was donated to Gettysburg National Military Park by descendants of the Wills family. The family's living members grew up hearing stories about the bed's connection to Lincoln and had been using it up until its donation. Park officials say they have the right bed and have the documents to prove it. (Evening Sun Photo by James Robinson)

The second, of course, is a healthy dose of skepticism - or cynicism, depending on one's point of view.

In a town where criticizing the National Park Service is practically a spectator's sport, it's not surprising supporters have jumped to the defense of Caroline Smith, the Gettysburg woman who went public several weeks ago claiming she owns the bed where the president slept the night before he delivered the Gettysburg Address.


Smith's claim came on the eve of a new museum opening in town - where another bed sits on display in a room of the David Wills House that no one disputes was Lincoln's bedroom on the night of

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Nov. 18, 1863.

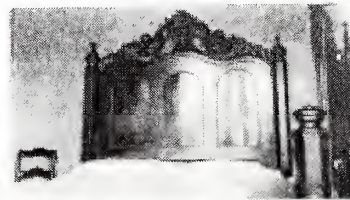
The story could have ended there. But officials at Gettysburg National Military Park say they are 100 percent confident their bed is the one that shared Lincoln's room that night, when the president put the finishing touches on his famous speech.

And they will continue to display the bed in the new museum for visitors who can choose to either brush past an inanimate object or marvel at its link to history.

But for those who choose to marvel, the question remains: Which bed is the real thing?

### Treasure in the attic

There is no hesitation in Caroline Smith's voice as she points her visitors' attention to the furniture in her guest room.



With this photo taken by Henry Luhrs in 1938, the photographer set out to document the location of the bed on which President Abraham Lincoln slept the night before giving the Gettysburg Address. The photo was taken at the Philadelphia home of Madeline Quimby Walker, granddaughter of David Wills. Gettysburg National Military Park officials produced this and other photos as part of the documentation supporting the bed's historical significance. (Evening Sun Photo by James Robinson)

"This is the Lincoln bed," she says with a smile.


She is visibly proud of the dark, hand-painted bed and its accompanying furniture. On a small table nearby sit nine pieces of a silver-dresser set that look as old as they are beautiful.

A "W" - which Smith said she can only assume stands for Wills - is printed on each piece. Linens hanging nearby are embossed with the same mark.

Smith said she found the linens and the silver set, which includes a mirror, brush, comb and other pieces, tucked away under the eaves of the Wills House attic - the same place she found the bed that she believes Lincoln slept on in 1863.

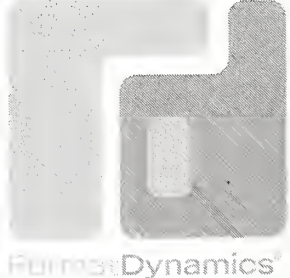
Smith, 74, had a point to make when she opened her home

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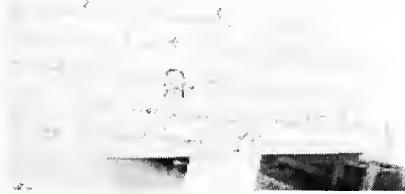


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recently to a reporter and photographer. Though not the first time she told her story publicly, Smith said she wanted to clarify the reasons for making the bold statement that she - not the National Park



In this letter written by Jennie Wills Quimby, she describes the home and furniture in the David Wills House when President Abraham Lincoln spent the night there in 1863. (Evening Sun Photo by James Robinson)

Service - owns the bed Lincoln slept on.

And it's got nothing to do with money or attention, Smith said.

Rather, she said she accepted the invitation of a radio-show host to share memories of her years at the Wills House days before it opened as a museum. On the show, Smith told a story she's told time and time again, but most often to family, friends and guests to her home.

Usually the story draws polite smiles. This time, it created a drama for the court of public opinion.

"I just didn't anticipate it making this stir," Smith said. "It bothers me that they're calling me a liar. It's an insult to my integrity. I just wanted to clarify things from my perspective."




The bed that Caroline Smith claims is the one Lincoln slept in is decorated with hand-painted flowers and gold trim. The bed's headboard is painted black. (Evening Sun Photo by James Robinson)

The story Smith tells begins with her husband, Leroy Smith, who has since died. Leroy Smith was a successful Gettysburg businessman in his day. In addition to other properties, he owned the Wills House, the Jennie Wade House and the property where the Gettysburg Tour Center now sits on Baltimore Street.

"He realized the possibilities of tourism in Gettysburg," Caroline said.


When Leroy first bought the Wills House, he opened a retail store on the first floor. Then, during the

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1960s and '70s, Caroline said, she and her husband began working on the building's second and third floors. A one-room museum had been operated on and off for years on



This bed occupies a guest room at Caroline Smith's Gettysburg home, as it has for the past 40 years. Smith believes President Abraham Lincoln slept on the bed the night before he gave the Gettysburg Address, though experts have never documented or authenticated her claims. Meanwhile, Gettysburg National Military Park officials have another bed on display at the David Wills House museum that they say is the real thing. (Evening Sun Photo by James Robinson)

the second floor, and apartments had occupied the third.

Ever the organizer, Caroline said she felt compelled to clean up the attic during a restoration project. There she found the bed, linens and silver set.

She asked her husband if she could take the beautiful bed home. He agreed, and it's been there since about 1970.

During a similar cleaning project at the Jennie Wade House, Caroline said, she found the dresser, wash stand and night table that matched the bed she'd found earlier. Those too were relocated to the

Smiths' home.

But it wasn't until years later that Caroline first heard the story she now believes wholeheartedly.

At a Gettysburg Address anniversary event, Caroline said, she met a woman named Mrs. Zimmerman, whom everyone there knew to be a descendant of the Wills family. She doesn't know Mrs. Zimmerman's first name or her exact connection to the Wills, but Caroline said the woman convinced her that the bed in her home is the same bed on which Lincoln slept.

According to Smith, Mrs. Zimmerman told her the bed then on display in the one-room Lincoln museum was not the authentic Lincoln bed. She went on to describe the real one as a black bed of a cottage furniture style with hand-painted flowers and gold trim. Smith realized her description matched the one she found in the attic.

"She says, 'Well, then you have the bed that Mr. Lincoln slept in,'" Smith said.

She's never had the story documented or the bed examined by a historian.


#### Making a case

Ask Greg Goodell to produce proof of the Lincoln bed's origin, and he comes out with a stack of papers it would take hours to read.

Most of the documents, Goodell explained, stem from a report completed in the 1930s by the Gettysburg National Military Park's then-senior historian, Frank Tilberg.


In addition to the Tilberg report, the park has photos, letters and wills that they've used to make a case for the bed on display in the Wills House as the one Lincoln slept on in 1863.

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Goodell, the park's current director of museum services, said Tilberg set out on a mission to reproduce a sketch of the Lincoln bedroom as it was in 1863. He caught a break when he found Jennie Wills Quimby, a living daughter of David Wills.

Quimby's mother, Catherine Wills, was pregnant with her when President Lincoln visited. But Quimby was able to relay the details of Lincoln's visit to Tilberg as it was told to her.

That correspondence, Goodell said, is the most direct link the park has to the truth of which bed Lincoln slept on.

"We feel that our written documentation is strong enough to support the oral recollections," he said.

The "oral recollections" are the stories of living Wills descendants, who - like Quimby - grew up hearing about Lincoln and his connection to the family. Allyn Reilly, a living great-great grandson of David Wills, ultimately donated the bed, which is now on display in the Wills House.

Park officials believe that after David Wills died in 1894, the Lincoln bed was inherited by his daughter Jennie. Before it returned to Gettysburg, park officials believe the bed also occupied the home of Quimby's daughter, Madaleine Quimby Walker, in Philadelphia. When Walker died, the bed went to Reilly's home in Athens, Ohio.

The family's confidence in the story, and the documentation that supports the bed's travels have park officials convinced they didn't make a mistake.

"This is a case where the chain of custody is solid enough that we feel confident in what we said," Goodell said.

But Goodell said he's not particularly surprised

another Lincoln bed claim is out there.

"Stories get associated with pieces very easily in this field," he said.

So, if one chooses to believe the National Park Service, another question arises: Where did Caroline Smith's bed come from?

#### Connect the dots

In her correspondence with Tilberg, Jennie Wills Quimby makes mention of another bed - a black, painted bed - that one can't help but raise an eyebrow at.

Quimby's letter says that furniture suit had been in "mother's room" during Lincoln's visit and was later inherited by another daughter, Emma.

Connect some dots, and a likely story begins to emerge.

According to Caroline Smith, the house her husband demolished to make way for the Gettysburg Tour Center had been the home of a daughter of David Wills. If that's true, then it's likely the furniture inside and later moved to the Jennie Wade and Wills houses was once owned by the Wills family.

That meshes with a story told by Pat Newton, another Gettysburg woman who said she could corroborate Smith's story.

Newton said she grew up in Gettysburg on Baltimore Street next to a house owned by a Mrs. lone McCammon. McCammon, Newton said, was the second wife of a man who had married a daughter of David Wills.

There's a good chance that daughter is Emma.

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When her husband died, McCammon inherited his belongings - including a bed she believed Lincoln had slept in the night before delivering the Gettysburg Address.

"She always told my grandmother, and other people I assume, that she had the bed that Lincoln slept in," Newton said. "I don't think Mrs. McCammon could have said this if she didn't think it was true."

Another connection is a will owned by the park that Goodell produced as part of the Lincoln bed documentation.

The will is McCammon's from May 1961. In it, a black bedroom suit is valued at \$25.

From a very brief study of the evidence, park officials surmised that it's possible Smith's bed is the one inherited by Emma Wills.

If that's true, Smith's bed was once a part of "mother's room," was then inherited by Emma Wills, passed on to her husband and his second wife, purchased by Leroy Smith and then found again by Caroline Smith in the Wills House - where it started.

#### Still a question

Park officials say they are not particularly interested in Smith's bed as a potentially significant artifact.

After all, they believe, they already have the real bed on display.

"We don't make presentations based on whims," Goodell said.

And that's probably a good thing because Smith said she has no intention of giving up her Lincoln bed, which has been a part of her home for nearly 40 years. She also does not plan on having it

professionally examined.

Smith said it doesn't bother her that most of the visitors who see the park's bed on display won't know there is another claim, another story that introduces at least a hint of doubt.

"If the Park Service is satisfied that they have the bed, then what's the big deal?" Smith said.

And park officials say they're OK with their claims being called into question.

"There can be a difference of opinion," park spokeswoman Katie Lawhon said.

If strong evidence supporting Smith's story ever does surface, Goodell said the park would be right to re-evaluate its own documentation.

But until then, the question is likely to remain just that.

"We can't prove or deny what we can't see," Goodell said.

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#### **HISTORIC BEDSTEAD.**

**W**HILE in the Tribune office last Friday, Mrs. Ada Story told us a bit of American history, which we had never heard before, and because it is interesting will pass it on to our readers.

Mrs. Story recited that in the 1860s that Abraham Lincoln visited her grandfather, Charlie Halstead, who was in the hotel business at Smithland at the time, and that Lincoln was his guest while in Smithland and that the furniture used on the occasion by Abraham Lincoln is still in the family and belongs to her (Mrs. Story), she having received the bed, a small table, a bureau and a chest of drawers, and she states that they are all in good state of preservation. The bed is mahogany and is very old, being a low four-poster and is fitted with slats rather than with cords. Mrs. Story says that tradition in her family has it that Lincoln slept on the bed and used the other furniture while there. This is interesting, but for one reason or another we had never known that there was furniture in Marshall County that was used by Lincoln.—(Benton Tribune-Democrat.







